

DAILY NEWS

MAY 2 1966

WAS SOMETHING PUT OVER ON THE AUDIENCE?

All Agree: The Dancers Shouldn't Have Danced Offstage

By MILTON BERLINER

A young man clutching a fistful of papers rushed up to the pulpit at Grace Church, 1041 Wisconsin-av nw, yesterday afternoon and started to read.

He was immediately flanked by two men who asked him to leave.

"Just give me five minutes," the young man pleaded.

From the audience, assembled for a symposium on the week's NOW festival, came a voice: "We had 12 years of Nazism in Europe. That's enough. Get out!"

The young man was persuaded to leave, and outside he said all he wanted to do was to read a paper on the "Condemnation of the Avant Garde."

Aside from this incident, the

NOW post-mortem went off as sedately as a garden club meeting.

Alice M. Denney, director of the Private Arts Foundation which brought the festival to Washington, opened by reading off a list of names of people who had helped make the NOW ball Saturday night a success.

RULES

Then the moderator, Rafael Squirru, director of cultural affairs at the Pan American Union set the ground rules.

He didn't want the symposium turned into another "happening," he said.

"So at the risk of being anti-anti, I suggest that there be some lines of law and disorder," he said. "We could start with agreeing that we are confronted

with audio visual experiences

and go on to chance elements and ambiguity. And simultaneity. Certain things happen at the same time, though not necessarily related."

He turned to a panel member, Alan Solomon, an art historian: "To what degree is this an essential aspect of form?"

"I would rather not talk about that," Mr. Solomon replied. "My main impression of the events of this week was that there was a tremendous gap between audience and artists. I think it was due to a fundamental misunderstanding as to what the intentions of the artists were."

DISSENT

"The safest conclusion was that the artists were putting something over on them."

Robert Rauschenberg, artist and NOW participant, said that

he had not been aware of the audience having been "imperceptive or intolerant."

"Tuesday evening (theater events) things got out of hand, physically," he admitted. "But I don't think anything was lost by that."

"You used white chickens; would red chickens have done the same?" Mr. Squirru asked.

"I like the excitement of not knowing what's going to happen," Mr. Rauschenberg replied. "If the ideas just don't come out then you have to try to effect some objectivity."

Mr. Squirru: "What made you choose white chickens?"

Mr. Solomon: "He has a thing about birds."

Mr. Rauschenberg: "Among other things."

Miss Denney: "He asked for white chickens."

"Mr. Squirru: "This is an important thing."

Mr. Squirru said some of the dancers went off stage and seemed to be performing out of sight for themselves.

"You have only my sincerest apologies," said Miss Rainer.

"I would like to stop these apologies," Mr. Rauschenberg interrupted. "I think it was an extraordinary thing."

"I was just apologizing for lack of visibility; it was not intentional," Miss Rainer explained.

"You don't separate the audience from the precariousness of the situation," said Mr. Rauschenberg.